



The Ten Commandments

ESTR

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## BY ELD. J. H. WAGGONER

“Are the Ten Commandments, or any part of them, binding on Christians?” *TCNA 1.1*

A friend has sent us an article under the above heading from the *Advent Herald*, republished in a Disciple (known as Campbellite) paper in Ohio, with a request that it may be reviewed. There is not a point in it that has not been met and refuted at different times; but as it seems to contain a summary of the usual arguments on the above subject, I will examine it as briefly as the subject and statements will allow. *TCNA 1.2*

It was once advised by a certain practical man that, when any object was before us, or any work to be accomplished, the first and great essential was to “take a position.” This we would heartily recommend to the several papers published by those known as “first-day Adventists,” and to all others that oppose God’s holy law. *TCNA 1.3*

We open one of these papers and find a score or two of “unanswerable arguments” (!) proving that the Sabbath is abolished. Another number, likely the very next, has an equally unanswerable argument that the Sabbath has been changed. We turn a page and read a report from a minister, more combative than spiritual-minded, giving time, place, and circumstances, of his utterly demolishing all the theses of Sabbatizers; and the next column contains another report from another minister, stating where he held forth his peculiar gospel on a certain “*Sabbath*.” Another number of the same paper will give an excellent selection on the sin of Sabbath-breaking, together with a stirring argument from the editor or some regular correspondent, clearly showing that you will certainly fall from grace if you keep the Sabbath! *TCNA 1.4*

Job, when vexed with the groundless accusations of his professed friends, earnestly wished that his adversary had written a book, doubtless judging that it would be an easier task to meet their raillery if it were only made tangible, and given a permanent form. But if his adversary had written a book as indefinite and contradictory in statement as the positions of the Sabbath-opposers, he would have found therein no relief from his

perplexity.*TCNA 2.1*

We open the *Advent Herald*, and find therein the advertisement of a book for sale at that office, wherein a certain proposition is clearly proved [these are the words] by showing that the ten commandments have been changed, or made complete, in the Christian dispensation.” Are the terms *changing*, or *making complete*, the ten commandments synonymous? Do they mean the same thing? If so, how much changing did they need to make them complete? By what scripture may we learn that they were incomplete from the time they were spoken by the voice of God till the ushering in of the Christian dispensation? And, seeing they were binding before this dispensation, is it because they are now made complete that no part of them is binding on us? If this is the reason, it is a very strange one indeed.*TCNA 2.2*

As the article in question proceeds to negative the query placed at its head, and attempts to show that no part of the ten commandments is binding on the Christian, we will first briefly glance over that law, and in so doing will ascertain in what particular it must be changed to become complete. 1. Thou shalt have no other gods before me. Is this changed? and how? Is this “part” binding on Christians? Reader, need we weary your patience to quote in order the prohibitions of idolatry, profanity, murder, adultery, theft, false witness, etc., to show the tendency of such arguments? Are *any* of these changed? Did they need anything to render them complete? Oh! no. It was only the fourth commandment that needed changing to make it complete. Well, wherein was it incomplete? It contained a specified duty, plainly expressed; so far it was complete, and could not be improved. It says the seventh day is the Sabbath, or rest of the Lord, which is true. It says God made heaven and earth in six days, and rested on, and hallowed, the seventh day. All this is true, and cannot be changed without being brought in conflict with truth. And it is all truth relating to works performed and facts existing, therefore resting on no contingencies or future events. Nothing could make it more complete. But we will turn to the argument on the above question, which opens as follows:-*TCNA 3.1*

“We answer, No. (1) They were a part of God’s national covenant

with the Jews, and were binding on no other people or persons, unless they were circumcised and adopted into the Jewish nation.”*TCNA 4.1*

The “No” is the answer to the question. What follows is (1) of a series of reasons to sustain the answer. This reference to the position of people or persons in the past is irrelevant unless they sustained the same relation to the law that we do. Very well. But it is asserted that “no part” of it is binding on us; therefore, no part was binding on the nations. Was it wrong for nations or persons outside of Israel to worship idols, blaspheme, kill, commit adultery, etc.? Not at all, according to that theory. If they should choose to become “circumcised and [be] adopted into the Jewish nation,” then these things would be wrong in them; not otherwise!*TCNA 4.2*

And this is a representation of what opposers of the Sabbath call “gospel liberty”! But we cannot so regard it. The freedom of the servants of Christ is freedom *from sin*-not liberty *to sin*. And “sin is the transgression of the law.” So then, they who still transgress the law are the servants of sin; they do not enjoy the freedom of the gospel. But let us apply a few scriptures to this reason. It avers that the ten commandments-every part-are binding only on those who are circumcised and adopted into the family of Israel. Well, Paul shows that *Christians occupy that very position*. That they are circumcised, see *Colossians 2:11*; that they are the adopted Israel, see *Ephesians 2:11*; “ye,” converts to Christianity, were, “*in time past*, Gentiles,” “*aliens from the commonwealth of Israel*,” *verse 12*; but now “are no more strangers and foreigners,” *verse 19*, but “fellow-heirs, and of *the same body*.” *Chap. 3:6*. See also *Romans 2:28, 29*. There are many who are “of the synagogue of Satan which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie,” *Revelation 3:9*, to whom Paul’s comments on the true Israel of God will not apply. They still occupy heathen ground, and on this ground claim exemption from God’s commandments! But there is another testimony from the apostle Paul which cuts off even this flimsy claim from those who are “uncircumcised in heart and ears,” and are still “Gentiles in the flesh.” He truly says to the Jew that circumcision is only profitable if they keep the law, “but if thou be a breaker of the law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision;” that is, they *heathenize* themselves by breaking the law-bring themselves down

on a level with the Gentiles, who wrought abominations in the sight of God. But, further, “if the uncircumcision,” that is, the Gentile, “keep the righteousness of the law, shall not his uncircumcision be counted for circumcision?” That is to say, if he keeps the law, though uncircumcised, he shall be accepted in the sight of God, even as though he were circumcised. This places *keeping the law* above circumcision or any carnal ordinances; for “the law is spiritual;” *Romans 7:14*; therefore obedience to it is right worship. And this fully justifies the apostle in another expression, *1 Corinthians 7:19*: “Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of God” (*is something*-Whiting’s translation). But, examined in the light of these scriptures, what does the above professed “reason” amount to? It is based on a misapprehension of outward circumcision, and, like that circumcision, it “is nothing.” *TCNA 4.3*

“(2) The law of God, ‘graven and written on tables of stone,’ *2 Corinthians 3:7*, ‘was to be done away,’ *verse 11*, ‘which is done away,’ and *verse 13*, ‘which is abolished,’ etc. Please read the chapter entire.” *TCNA 6.1*

Perhaps there is no passage of Scripture which is oftener perverted to a bad use than that quoted or garbled as above. Mr. Anderson, author of a translation which is becoming very popular among Disciples, regards the expression in the first part of *verse 7 (2 Corinthians 3)* as elliptical, and supplies as follows: “But if the ministration of death *by means of a covenant* written and engraven in stones,” etc. Mr. Anderson does not pretend that the original contains the equivalents of these supplied words, as he places them in italics, but he, doubtless, does consider, and correctly, too, we think, that the supply is necessary from the obvious fact that the word “ministration” cannot refer to that which was written on the tables of stone. The following is a full definition of *ministration* as given by Webster: “1. The act of performing service as a subordinate agent; agency; intervention for aid or service. 2. Office of a minister; service; ecclesiastical function.” That the priests ministered in respect to that which was written on stone, is truth, to which all must agree; that their *service* or ministration was written thereon, none can with any show of reason affirm. Now, we know that Moses was the first minister; and that it refers to the service or

work of the minister is plain by the reference to “the glory of his countenance,” which alone was veiled, *verse 13*, and which represented that which was to be done away. It is said the veil was put upon Moses’ face to hide its glory from the people, “that the children of Israel could not steadfastly look to the end of that which is abolished.” This cannot refer at all to the law on the tables, for they were not veiled; the glory of that which is abolished pertained to Moses, the minister-not to the law. *TCNA 6.2*

But what do our opponents gain by this text to prove that no part of the ten commandments is binding on Christians? One part of that law is, Thou shalt not commit adultery; is this not binding on Christians? Other parts forbid murder, theft, falsehood, idolatry, and profanity; are these parts not binding on Christians? Do these people really mean what they say? How will they evade the inevitable conclusion drawn from their teachings? We know that to avoid the Sabbath is the sole object of all such arguments, but is it not sufficient evidence that the cause is bad when such means have to be resorted to in order to sustain it? We leave the objection here, with all its deformity and immorality apparent to every beholder. *TCNA 7.1*

“(3) ‘The law,’ embracing the whole Mosaic system, ‘was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made.’ *Galatians 3:19*. Christ was that seed. *Verse 16*. ‘The law was our school-master to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith; but after that faith has come we are no longer under a school-master.’ *Verses 24, 25*. ‘Christ is the end of the law for righteousness, to every one that believeth.’ *Romans 10:4*. ‘Ye are not under the law, but under grace.’ *Romans 6:14*.” *TCNA 7.2*

It is a very easy matter to quote Scripture without reference to its connection and true meaning, when you have the prejudice of the hearer or reader already enlisted in favor of the construction you wish to put upon it. So the bigoted opponent of the doctrine of the second advent will quote, “Of that day and hour knoweth no man,” and walk off with an air of triumph, as though no other instruction was given on the subject. So the advocate of the temporal millennium will declare that Christ is to possess the heathen and the

uttermost parts of the earth, but will not listen to the next verse, which tells that he will dash them in pieces as a potter's vessel. But they quoted Scripture! Yes; and so did the writer of the above objection to "the law;" and with about the same propriety. Four texts are quoted, but no reason is given to show that the construction put upon them is just. *TCNA 8.1*

In *Romans 5:20*, the apostle says, "The law entered, that the offense might abound;" "the offense," then, must have existed before the "law entered." A parallel to this is found again in *Romans 7:13*, "That sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful." But sin is the transgression of the law, and no law could make an offense or sin appear sinful except the one transgressed; as it would be absurd to attempt to convince any one of the wrong of theft by quoting the law which says, Thou shalt not kill. *TCNA 8.2*

It must be acknowledged by all that the abolition of a law and the pardon of its transgression cannot possibly go together. If the law is abolished, no pardon is needed. If pardon is extended, the perpetuity or validity of the law stands acknowledged. To redeem from the curse of the law, *Galatians 3:13*, is essentially different from releasing from obligation to the law. To redeem the Gentiles from the curse of the law, *Galatians 3:14*, is to prove that the Gentiles were amenable to the law, contrary to the objector's "(1)." This redemption being in order to confer on them the blessing of Abraham, *verse 14*, proves that the right to the blessing of Abraham is forfeited by transgression of the law. We contend that the *relations* of the law, and not the *existence* of the law, is the subject of the apostle's discourse. Again, *Galatians 3:25* and *Romans 6:14*, both quoted, are parallel both in expression and sense. We are not under the school-master, or law, because "faith is come"-we are "under grace." But were we or any others under grace before we exercised faith in Christ? We were not. But if, before our profession of faith or conversion to Christ, we were not under grace, what were we under? Certainly under the law. What Paul says to the Romans and Galatians on this subject must refer to them individually, and not only to them, but to all that are Christ's. Two expressions of the apostle in connection are worthy of careful notice. "For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." "But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law."



*Galatians 5:14, 18.* The converse of this last is true: if ye are not led of the Spirit, ye are under the law. But as the law is fulfilled in love, it is evident the apostle does not mean that ye are not *under obligation* to the law, if led of the Spirit, but not *under condemnation*; ye are redeemed from its curse. The objection refers the passages to Christians, and there is where they belong. *TCNA 8.3*

But if the Christian was not under grace, but under the law, before he became a Christian, is the law abolished? If it is, he is not under it; and if so, he must have been under grace before he had faith in Christ! and if so, again, all the world must be under grace! for none can be under an abolished law. The Universalists ought to give our opponents a vote of thanks for this. It is as good an argument as was ever adduced for universal salvation. But having shown that it is subversive of the whole system of the gospel, and of every principle of law and of justice, we are willing to rest it with the candid reader. *TCNA 9.1*

*Romans 10:4:* "Christ is the end of the law." In what sense? Does "end" here mean abolition? No; for he did not come to destroy it; *Matthew 5:17*; and it is not made void, or abolished. *Romans 3:31.* In *James 5:11*, and *1 Peter 1:9*, the same word is used where the sense is the *object*, or *design*. And this is its meaning here. In *Romans 7:10*, it is said the law was ordained unto life. Life was the object, or design, of the law. See *Deuteronomy 30:15, 16*; *Leviticus 18:5*; *Romans 2:13*; etc. But man, by transgression of the law, brought himself under condemnation, and Christ now works out the object or design of the law, by procuring our pardon and giving us life. In this work, the carnal mind, which is enmity against God, and not in subordination to his law, is taken away, and the "body of sin" destroyed; of course the person on whom this is wrought is restored to obedience. And this is the full meaning of *Romans 10:4*, for righteousness is not without obedience. "Unrighteousness is sin," says the apostle, and "sin is the transgression of the law." If unrighteousness is transgression of the law, its opposite, righteousness, must be the opposite of transgression, which is obedience. But none but the believer will obey-the *genuine* believer, too; for many profess to believe who will not obey; they say to Jesus, Lord, Lord, but do not the will of his Father; they make void

the commandment of God by their tradition; they will not keep the commandments of God, *and* the faith of Jesus. To such, *Romans 10:4*, has no reference whatever. *TCNA 10.1*

But if it be still contended that the perpetuity or abolition of the law is brought in question in this text, let us read it so. "Christ has abolished the law for righteousness, *to every one that believeth.*" Passing by the singularity of the "righteousness" which is accomplished by the abolition of a law that is "holy and just and good," we inquire, Does it affirm, with your own rendering, the abolition of the law to any but the believer? No. Singular again; a universal law abolished to some and not to others! Is it abolished to the believer *before* he believes? We wish our opponents would answer this, as their view involves principles of law with which we are not acquainted. But we will consider it answered in the negative, as the text refers only to the believer, which no man is, in a state of unbelief. Then suppose he should "fall from grace," or deny the faith, or reject Christ and his gospel entirely, as many have done, does the law still remain abolished to him, or is it re-enacted in his case? Does anybody believe the apostle Paul was ever guilty of teaching such absurdities as the views of the no-law theorists involve him in? We deplore their work; not that we particularly object to their erecting a monument to their own folly, for they are worthy of it, but we pity the blind who are being led by such blind leaders. *TCNA 11.1*

"(4) In the days of the apostles, some said that believing Gentiles 'must be circumcised and keep the law of Moses, or they could not be saved.' *Acts 15*. To decide this question was the object of the first general council convened at Jerusalem. The result was, under the direct teaching of the Holy Ghost, that the council decided that through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, they (the Gentiles) shall be saved even as we (the Jews). Four things only were enjoined on them: 'To abstain from idols, from blood, from things strangled, and from fornication.' This, then, became, not the Mosaic law and condition of justification as such, but a Christian rule of action, enjoined by the Holy Ghost on believers, through this council." *TCNA 11.2*

If the writer of the above really supposed that it would pass as an

argument against the ten commandments or the Sabbath, he must have presumed greatly on the ignorance of his readers. It is enough to read that circumcision and the law of Moses were the subjects of discussion, to see the irrelevancy of the above argument. Does any one—even the writer of the above—suppose that the apostles and elders in council would gravely discuss and formally decide that the Gentiles need not keep “the ten commandments nor any part of them”? Were they absolved from the duty to honor parents? and could they blaspheme, steal, kill, bear false witness, and break the Sabbath, and incur no guilt thereby? Yes; most surely; for the apostles said nothing about these things! Such is the conclusion of the no-law and no-Sabbath argument. Do not think, dear reader, that we misinterpret or misrepresent our opponents. Read for yourself: “Four things only were enjoined on them: To abstain from idols, from blood, from things strangled, and from fornication.” This, and this only, is declared to be “a Christian rule of action.” This not only does not mention any other duties, but *it specifically excludes them*. Therefore, whoever says that the Gentiles should *not* kill, or steal, or blaspheme, contradicts the decision of this council, according to the testimony of our opponents. We should think they would cease to advocate a theory so immoral in its tendency, for shame’s sake. And may it ever be a warning to us, as we witness how completely men are blinded and snared by the enemy when they oppose God’s law. We hold, and teach, in harmony with the council of Jerusalem, that circumcision and the law of Moses are not binding; and in harmony with the Saviour also, who said that worship is vain when it makes void the commandment of God.*TCNA 12.1*

“(5) Christ said, ‘I am not come to destroy the law or the prophets, but to fulfill.’ *Matthew 5:17*. He did fulfill each jot and tittle, both in its preceptory and penal departments. He then cried, ‘It is finished, and gave up the ghost.’ *John 19:28-30*. He had fulfilled all its precepts, and for us he met its penalties. Thus he magnified the law, and made it honorable, and ‘nailed it to the cross.’ *Colossians 2:14*. No jot or tittle of the law now remains in force as a rule of life, or condition of justification or salvation; ‘that being dead wherein we were held.’ ‘We are delivered from the law.’ ‘Ye are also become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another; to him who is raised from the dead.’ *Romans 7:4, 6*. If we

are become dead to the law by the body of Christ, and are married to another, what right has the old husband to control our action? We are bound only to Christ. Hence, when he sent his disciples to teach all nations, he said, 'Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.' It was not what Moses or the prophets had commanded that was to constitute a rule of life, but what Jesus commanded. He is our Lord and Master, and 'his commandments are not grievous.'" *TCNA 13.1*

First, the Saviour's words are quoted wherein he said he did not come to destroy the law, and then a labored argument is instituted to show that he *did* destroy it; thus making his action contradict his words. Can any one have confidence in Jesus as a Saviour, and in such teachings at the same time? Reference is also made to *Isaiah 42:21*: "He will magnify the law and make it honorable." Magnify, says Webster, is "to extol; to exalt; to elevate; to raise in estimation." Do our opponents believe the Saviour did such a work as this? And if they do, who would ever gather it from their writings? Was the law "elevated" by its abolition? Did he "raise it in the estimation" of the no-law theorists, who spare no pains to disparage it? But again, he "will make it honorable." This does not show that it was not honorable before, for we know it was; it therefore means that he will make it still more honorable; the same as to magnify it—exalt it, extol it, raise it still higher in estimation than it had before been held. Though every way honorable in itself, it had been dishonored by transgression, and he came to vindicate its claims, to suffer its penalty, thereby showing its sacredness and perpetuity, and to enforce it on men anew, yes, to write it in their hearts; so that instead of transgressing it, they might love it, delight in it, consent that it is holy, just, and good, and so worship God by obeying his law "in newness of spirit," and not merely in letter. We believe the blessed Saviour does all this in taking away *the carnal mind*, which Paul says *is not subject to the law of God*, and giving us hearts of love and obedience. But how do our opponents say he magnified the law and made it honorable? By (1) breaking it himself; (2) teaching others to do so; (3) abolishing it; (4) inspiring his apostles to denounce it as a yoke of bondage, etc. But the reader who loves reason, justice, and consistency, will see that the law that is magnified and made honorable is not the same one that is abolished; the one written in the heart is not the one nailed to the

cross; the spiritual law is not a carnal commandment; the law which becomes a delight to the converted believer in Christ is not a yoke of bondage. *TCNA 13.2*

“No jot or tittle of the law now remains in force as a rule of life.” How different from the teachings of Jesus: “Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in nowise pass from the law, till all [*all things, Greenfield, in Heaven and earth, Wesley,*] be fulfilled.” So far from his teaching that it is not a rule of life, he proceeds to condemn those who break the law, or “any part” of it, and who teach others to do so. *TCNA 14.1*

The writer, arguing that the Christian is released from obligation to keep the law, quotes, “that being dead wherein we were held,” and applies it to the law. If this were a correct rendering of the original, the above application would still be a perversion of the text, for all the context shows that it is the sinner that dies-not the law. But it is not a true rendering. *Paul never made any such declaration concerning the law.* Probably the writer of the above knew that all authorities are agreed that the marginal reading is the true one; possibly he knew that the word *apothanontes*, from which “being dead” is rendered, was plural, and therefore *could not* refer to the law; but it was far from serving his purpose to recognize such facts. He had a theory to maintain, and oftentimes it happens that false theories may be as effectually advanced by concealing the truth as by promulgating an error. *TCNA 15.1*

Nor is the law represented by the husband in the illustration of *Romans 7*. By reference to *verse 4*, it will be seen that *the same individuals that died were afterward married to another*, by virtue of a *new life* received through faith in Christ. The law is that by which a woman having two husbands is convicted of adultery. We prefer Paul’s application of this illustration to that of the no-law theorists; and there is a very wide difference between the two. The expression “dead to the law,” is equivalent to that of *chap. 6:2*: “dead to sin;” for it is only on account of sin that we die to the law. We have sinned, and the wages of sin is death, and the law holds us under its condemning power until death takes place, because a state of sin is a state of condemnation. We need not, however, literally die; but to avoid this, “the old man is crucified;” “the body of

sin is destroyed,” that “henceforth we should not serve sin.” Through faith in Christ we so change our relation to the law that we are freed from its condemnation. We die to transgression; the law does not die. We change our relation to the law; the law does not change at all. But if the law was abolished by the Saviour, how do we die to it? By what act, or in what manner, is our relation ever changed to a law which was abolished 1800 years before we were born? Will our opponents attempt to show? When they do, we shall be pleased to note their progress. *TCNA 15.2*

Now, that we are dead is shown in that we are buried in baptism; but the apostle says we are not dead to the law, or dead to sin, while living in transgression; therefore, they who are still living in transgression of the law are not proper subjects of baptism. No change has been effected in them, which is here represented by death; the “old man” is still alive; “the body of sin,” or transgression, has not been crucified, but is yet alive, and shows its life by endeavoring to *crucify the law*, instead of yielding to its righteous demands. In every respect, such stand in direct opposition to the apostle’s teachings to the Romans. And if they have ever been buried in baptism, it was unscriptural and invalid, for no death to sin-to transgression of the law-had taken place. They were not buried in the likeness of Christ’s death, for he died *before* he was buried. They are the very ones who are committing spiritual adultery, or making strong efforts to do so, by being united to “the body of sin,” *Romans 6:6*, and trying to be united to “the body of Christ,” *chap. 7:4*, at the same time. The “body of sin” is the “body of death,” *7:24*; and the opposers of the law (the carnally minded) will find it so. And when such arise from baptism, it is to walk in the same old life of transgression-not in newness of life. *TCNA 16.1*

A further effort is made by quoting the expression, “we are delivered from the law.” Here, again, are counter claims set up. We claim that by sin the law holds us under condemnation; that through Christ we cease to sin, receiving also forgiveness for the past, and are thus released from its power to condemn. Our opponents claim that the law was binding on us, but by the faith of Christ we are delivered from its obligation, so that neither the law as a whole, “nor any part of it,” is binding on us to perform. We do not claim-we do not ask-such a deliverance, we “delight in the law of God,” being freed from

it so far as its power to condemn is concerned. Now we think we have plainly pointed out these two positions in the New Testament, and shown the tendency and result of each. But we think also that both these positions are subjects of prophecy. *TCNA 17.1*

1. We delight in the law, and claim that the law is written in our hearts. See *Jeremiah 31:33; Isaiah 51:7. TCNA 17.2*

2. Our opponents disclaim all connection with the law, and claim that they are *delivered from obligation to obey any part of it*. But the law forbids theft, murder, adultery, false witness, idolatry, etc. What say our opponents? They say, not any part of the ten commandments is binding on Christians. Why not? Because Christ has *delivered them from obligation to keep the law*. Now we see where the prophecy applies. *Jeremiah 7:8-10*: “Behold, ye trust in lying words, that cannot profit. Will ye steal, murder, and commit adultery, and swear falsely, and burn incense unto Baal, and walk after other gods whom ye know not; and come and stand before me in this house which is called by my name, and say, We are delivered to do all these abominations?” The deliverance here claimed can be from nothing but from obligation to the law which forbids such things; therefore the prophecy is an exact representation of the position of the antinomian theorists. If they feel hurt that we should think thus of them, or apply such a prophecy to them, we reply to the first that we have no confidence in human nature; it needs all the restraint that God’s holy law ever threw over it. To the second, we say, If you do not like the application of the prophecy, just change your position so it will not apply. But so long as you stand where it *does* apply to you, it is a small matter whether any make the application or not; the great day at hand will try every man’s work, and reveal every man’s true position. *TCNA 17.3*

We cannot consent to pass from the seventh chapter of Romans without leaving an appeal to the reader in respect to the two opinions in reference to it. Our opponents claim, as before shown, that the law is dead—they have nothing to do with it, unless to denounce it. We claim that the sinner must so die to sin that he will gladly keep the law. Here is a plain issue. Now Paul makes a number of statements in this connection which we propose to notice. And the reader will also bear in mind that when our

opponents take up the *first part* of *Romans 7*, we invariably meet them on the issue, and examine the texts; and when we read other texts in close connection which plainly contradict their theory, they pass them by without a notice. Why is this? Remember, the harmony of Scripture is what assures us of truth. While we proceed to quote these expressions of Paul, let the reader apply them to the view of our opponents if he can harmonize them with that view. *TCNA 18.1*

1. Being united to Christ, we are to “serve in newness of spirit.” *TCNA 19.1*

2. The law convinced Paul of sin. *TCNA 19.2*

3. The law slew him. (Could a dead law slay him? or did he slay the law?) *TCNA 19.3*

4. The law is holy, just, and good. *TCNA 19.4*

5. The law is spiritual (therefore to be kept right must be obeyed in newness of spirit). *TCNA 19.5*

6. The law became Paul’s delight. *TCNA 19.6*

7. The precept of the law is kept by us who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. *Chap. 8:4. TCNA 19.7*

8. The carnal mind is not subject to the law. *TCNA 19.8*

Will our no-law friends appropriate these expressions to their side of the question? We should be pleased to see the trial. *TCNA 19.9*

The seventh of the above, on *chap. 8:4*, is never noticed by our opponents; perhaps not well appreciated by many of our friends. We shall at least be excused for justifying our rendering: “That the *righteousness* of the law might be fulfilled in us.” Common version. The word rendered righteousness is *dikaioma* by Greenfield defined, “law, precept, statute, ordinance;” by Robinson, “decree, ordinance, precept.” The passage in Bloomfield’s Notes on the Greek is rendered, “the *requisition* of the law.” Whiting’s Trans., “the *precept* of the law.” Bible Union Version, “the *requirement* of the



law.” Sawyer’s Trans., “the *righteous ordinance* of the law.” Comp. Com., “*precept*,” with the remark: “Slade, Locke, Taylor, etc., observe that this *dikaionoma* being said to be done *by* us, not *in* us, is an unanswerable argument against the antinomian dogmas.” They who, through faith in Christ, walk after the Spirit, “obey the requisition of the law,” “fulfill the precept of the law.” The carnally minded, of course, are “delivered to do abominations,” contrary to the law. *TCNA 19.10*

“His [Jesus’] commandments are not grievous.” This perversion of Scripture is so palpable that it needs little notice to expose it. Turn to *1 John 5*, and see, throughout the whole chapter, the distinction kept up between God and his Son, Jesus Christ. “Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God; and every one that loveth him that begat, loveth him also that is begotten of him. By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments; and his commandments are not grievous.” He who would so pervert the testimony of God’s word, so plainly stated, will not hesitate to do anything to accomplish his purpose. Of course, John does not contradict Paul. It is to them that “love God” that “his commandments are not grievous.” The carnal mind does not agree to this; hatred is shown in all it does and says. May the Lord divest us all of this carnal mind. *TCNA 20.1*

“(6) But why keep the law, or any part of it? Is it simply for form? or for justification? To observe it for simple form is mockery. To observe it for justification is vain. For ‘by the deeds of the law, there shall no flesh be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin.’ *Romans 3:20*. ‘Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.’ *Romans 5:1*. ‘Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ.’ *Galatians 2:16*.” *TCNA 20.2*

Our greatest wonder in reading the above is, that a person can be so utterly blinded as to find a reason therein for violation of the law. An explanation, we think, is found in the selfishness manifested in the first part. Only two ideas seem to present themselves to the mind of the writer; to wit, “form” and “justification.” Obedience to God, seeking his pleasure and glory, without regard to personal

considerations, does not seem to be a motive with him at all. We are not surprised at this, however. We have long observed the same characteristic in those who set aside the law of God; their whole teachings and lives show that their religion is not founded on love to God-which inspiration says is the keeping of his commandments-but with them the gospel is a mere expedient by which to get to Heaven. Whatever will not "justify," or directly result in their personal benefit, they find no use for in their system of theology. They have never learned that "to obey is better than sacrifice." They find no medium between *sacrifice* and *formality*. They are well deserving of our pity. Now, we confess and firmly believe that we are not justified by the law. But what is the reason given in the text quoted why we are not justified by the law? It is this: "For by the law is the knowledge of sin." Very well; and if this be so-if the law is that which convicts of sin-how can a person transgress that law and be sinless?*TCNA 20.3*

Why will not our opponents notice this point? Paul before declared that "all have sinned," and this is given as the reason, *and the only reason*, why none can be justified by the law. For he said again, "The doers of the law shall be justified." *Romans 2:13*. This shows that the law is all right; that it contains all the elements of a perfect character-of justification; but all, having transgressed it, are condemned by it, and all are alike dependent on Jesus Christ for redemption. But mark; the law continues to be the rule of right; for the knowledge of sin is by the law still. But, on the other hand, if the law is abolished, the knowledge of sin can be no longer by the law; for surely an obsolete, abolished law can convince no man of sin. Then, pray answer this, What does convict of sin since the law is abolished? Is it the gospel? If so, let us read the text according to that idea: "Therefore, by the deeds of the gospel there shall no flesh be justified in his sight; for by the gospel is the knowledge of sin." Will this answer the purpose of our opponents? It is plain to see by the apostle's argument, that the *fault is not with the law, but with the transgressor*. And notice the different conclusions drawn by our opponents and the apostle. They say, We are not justified by the law, but by faith; therefore, the law is made void, and we need not keep it, nor any part of it. Paul says, We are not justified by the law, but we are proved sinners by it; we are justified only by faith; but "do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid; yea, we

establish the law.” Are the no-law people so ignorant that they cannot see the connection between *verses 9, 19, 20, and 31, of Romans 3*? We doubt it. There is evidently some reason why they refuse to notice the relation of the apostle’s statements, and we have no idea that it will stand the test of the Judgment, to which this whole matter will soon be referred. *TCNA 21.1*

“(7) The Galatians received the gospel by Paul’s ministry, and afterward were bewildered, or bewitched, by some who insisted on salvation by the deeds of the law, beginning with circumcision. Paul wrote them, ‘O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you? I only would learn of you one thing.’ What was that one thing? ‘Did ye receive the Spirit by the deeds of the law, or by the hearing of faith?’ Of course they must answer, if at all, ‘By the hearing of faith.’ Well, then, ‘Are ye so foolish, having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?’ *Galatians 3:1-3.*” *TCNA 22.1*

If any can now be found who have left the faith of Christ, and vainly expect to be justified by the law, to them will the above apply. But we are not acquainted with any such; therefore, a reply is not needed. We shall show, however, before concluding this review, that our no-law opponents come nearer to occupying that ground than any other class of religionists in the land. Mark if we do not make this word good. *TCNA 23.1*

“(8) If not obedience to the law, but faith in Jesus Christ, is the condition of justification, why keep the law of Moses, or any part of it? To do it with the hope of justification, is to renounce grace, and depend on works. ‘And whosoever of you are justified by the law, ye are fallen from grace,’ by which ye were first saved.” *TCNA 23.2*

This is but a reiteration of a former statement. It reminds us of a person who got up “ten unanswerable arguments” against the law—one to each commandment—but to make a greater show, re-arranged and changed the wording, so as to swell the list to fifty! So this No. 8 seems to be thrown in—not to present a new idea, for it contains none, but to swell the list and make a display. *TCNA 23.3*

“(9) But is the seventh-day Sabbath abolished? Yes, utterly. When the law died, that died. When that glorious law, ‘written and engraven on tables of stone,’ was ‘abolished,’ ‘done away,’ etc., it

was entire. No vestige remains to dispute the right of obedience with Christ. The law of Christ is now the believer's only rule of life. Nobody was ever under it till God gave it for a sign between him and Israel. *Ezekiel 20:20*, and *Exodus 31*. Nor has it ever bound anybody since the substance or body which cast the shadow was reached. That it ended there, Paul teaches most clearly. *Colossians 2:13-17*: 'And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; and having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it. Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holy day, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days; which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ.' The sabbath days, the whole of them, were then taken away, abolished, nailed to the cross, as well as meats and drinks, new moons, and holy days. 'So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman [Mount Sinai, in Arabia], but of the free [the New Jerusalem].' 'Stand fast, therefore, in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.' *Galatians 4:31*, and *5:1*. But is there no Sabbath now? No; not like that of Moses; that if you pick up a stick, or kindle a fire on that day, you shall be stoned to death." *TCNA 23.4*

1. That part of the above which relates to the abolition of the law has already been noticed. *TCNA 24.1*

2. The Sabbath was truly a sign between God and Israel, but for what? That they might know that he was the true God that made heaven and earth. See the texts. And it is such a sign still; it is yet true that God made all things in six days; that he rested the seventh day; that he blessed and hallowed the rest-day; and that he commanded that it be kept holy. The "word of the Lord endureth forever." *TCNA 24.2*

3. The seventh-day Sabbath is never spoken of as a shadow; and this very qualification of the apostle shows that the above is a perversion of the Scriptures. The sabbath days referred to in *Colossians 2*, are defined to be "shadows of things to come." There

were yearly sabbaths in the law of Moses, which were shadows of the work of Christ, and to these the text refers; but the seventh-day Sabbath, being a memorial of a work in the past, and having no reference in its institution or commandment to anything future, is of course excluded from the text. Any person can see this at a glance. The candid must acknowledge it. *TCNA 24.3*

4. The freedom of the gospel is freedom from sin; but the intent of the above quotation is to prove that gospel freedom is solely freedom from obligation to obey the law of God! We invite the readers to draw anything else from the argument if they can. The Saviour said his Father's law was in his heart, and he delighted to do his will. *Psalm 40:8*. He gave the Father's will as a test of the heavenly origin of his doctrines. *John 7:16, 17*. Paul further defines the will of God to be his law; *Romans 2:17, 18*; and shows that the gospel takes away the carnal mind, and restores us to obedience to the law, as we have already proved. But, judging from the argument now under review, the only bondage that the children of men were ever under was the obligation to keep God's law, and the only liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free is liberty to transgress his Father's law at our will and pleasure! Again, I say, such freedom we do not covet; we love the restraints of a holy law, and thank God for a rule that is so just, that convinces us of sin when we go astray, that leads us to look away from weak and sinful self to Christ for justification. We have no fault to find with the law; like one of old, we will leave our complaint upon ourself; or say with the apostle, "For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin." Can our opponents place themselves along side the apostle in this sentiment? They will not. There is a world-wide difference between them and Paul on this subject. *TCNA 25.1*

"(10) But there is the first day of the week; the day of our Lord's resurrection, which from that time has always been a day of rest and worship to his disciples. He has honored, owned, and blessed its observance, and put a mark of his displeasure on those who disregard and profane it. Constantine did not institute the first day of the week as the Sabbath; but he found it in universal observance among Christians, as a Christian institution, and threw around it the protection of law, that Christians should not be disturbed in their devotions and rest, just the same as most, if not all, the States of

this Union have done. Whatever Christ saw fit to transfer from the Mosaic to the Christian system, he or his apostles brought forward and re-affirmed; and that is binding on Christians, but nothing more.”*TCNA 25.2*

Thus closes the article; and seldom do we find more assumptions without proof, and without the possibility of being proved, than in the above.*TCNA 26.1*

1. There is no proof that the first day was observed by Christians from the time of the resurrection.*TCNA 26.2*

2. There is no proof that God has “honored, owned, and blessed its observance,” or put a mark of displeasure on those who disregard it. How shall we know this to be so? Must we take the writer’s word for it? Does not the word still remain, that “by the law is the knowledge of sin”? If it is sinful to “profane” the first day of the week, where is the law which proves it so? We know that in the book referred to in the beginning of this review, it is claimed that the law is so “changed or completed” as to enforce the keeping of Sunday. But how is a law which is “utterly abolished,” of which “not a vestige remains,” to enforce the keeping of the first day of the week? Is that the authority they find for keeping Sunday? When they undertake to wield the sword, they should be careful as to which way it cuts.*TCNA 26.3*

3. Inasmuch as there is no law for the observance of Sunday, such observance is “will-worship,” and is denounced by the apostle in his epistle to the Colossians. As was said by one of the past century, that is not obedience for which there is no commandment.*TCNA 26.4*

4. We admit that “Constantine did not institute the first day of the week as the Sabbath,” for neither he nor any other had yet called it the Sabbath at that time. He enforced it under the name of “the venerable day of the sun” (Sun’s day-Sunday), which was the only veneration paid to it at that time. And, says the writer, “he threw around it the protection of law.” Yes; and this was the first protection of the kind it had ever received; so says Alexander Campbell, and all history attests its correctness. But the Scripture says, “Where no law is, there is no transgression;” therefore as there was no law for

Sunday-keeping till Constantine, so the “profanation” of Sunday, spoken of above, could not exist till his decree went forth! If our opponents dissent, will they please point to the law that existed previously? Give us the “law and the testimony” for keeping Sunday, and the controversy ceases at once. *TCNA 26.5*

5. Whatever Christ saw fit to transfer from the law to the Christian system, is now binding, says the writer. Well, what did he transfer? The writer does not tell us, but *perhaps* he would say all of the ten commandments except the fourth. We could, however, disprove it by his own position on *Acts 15*, where he avers that they were not transferred or given to the Gentiles! But allowing them to take both positions, as they generally do, we would inquire, If the commandments, Thou shalt not kill, nor commit adultery, nor steal, are transferred into the Christian system, why do you keep them? “Is it for form? or for justification?” If for form, it is mockery; but if for justification, then it is vain; for justification by law is impossible. *I challenge any one to show that a moral obligation can be so related as to justify a sinner.* Again I refer to Mr. Campbell, who declares it an impossibility to be justified by the same instrument which convicts of sin. In this dilemma our opponents are placed; seeking justification by these laws, or keeping them for form, if they keep them at all, which we should certainly doubt from their own arguments. They have but one instrument to condemn and justify, to slay and make alive. Their theology is consistent neither with reason nor justice, nor even with itself. *TCNA 27.1*

Yet these men, throwing aside the holy law, which Paul abundantly shows convinces of sin, and thereby proves to our awakened consciences that we need a Saviour, accuse us of denying Christ, the blessed Son of God, because, like him, we strive to keep his Father’s commandments! *TCNA 28.1*

We contend that no one can appreciate the sacrifice and mediation of Christ, and the pardon offered through him, who does not regard the law of God as holy, just, good, and of perpetual obligation. The certainty of condemnation, and the necessity of pardon, are based on the power and immutability of the law. Yet they who urge that the law is abolished accuse us of disregarding the gospel, and themselves profess to be the true servants of God! We are

reminded of the words of Andrew Fuller, the celebrated Baptist author, who wrote:-*TCNA 28.2*

“An atonement has respect to justice, and justice to the law or rule which men have violated. If this be worthy of being traduced by a servant of Christ, it was worthy of the same treatment from his Lord and Master; and then, instead of being honored by his life and death, it ought to have been annulled, both in respect of him and of us. The doctrine of the cross, according to this view of things, was so far from being a display of the divine glory that it must have been a most shocking exhibition of injustice.”*TCNA 28.3*

And again: “Such views of the atonement excite an irreverent familiarity with God, and in some cases a daring boldness in approaching him; yet such is the strength of the antinomian delusion that it passes for intimate communion with him.”*TCNA 28.4*

This “antinomian delusion” has, in all ages, by the godly and eminently pious, been considered a most dangerous heresy. It has been opposed by all true reformers. Thus I copy from a work recently read:-*TCNA 29.1*

“The Methodist Conference under Wesley, in 1770, declared that the universal immorality then prevailing was because of the widespread opinion that Christ had annulled the moral law, and that evangelical freedom dispensed with the ten commandments.”*TCNA 29.2*

Wesley’s notes on this subject were attacked by certain dignitaries of the established church, which gave rise to “Fletcher’s Checks to Antinomianism,” a work worthy of the perusal of every Bible student.*TCNA 29.3*

Andrew Fuller, in his remarks on the Atonement and Justification, said:-*TCNA 29.4*

“If the doctrine of atonement leads us to entertain degrading notions of the law of God, or to plead an exemption from its preceptive authority, we may be sure it is not the Scripture doctrine of reconciliation. Atonement has respect to justice, and justice to the law, or the revealed will of the sovereign, which has been violated,



and the very design of the atonement is to repair the honor of the law. If the law which has been transgressed were unjust, instead of an atonement being required for the breach of it, it ought to have been repealed, and the lawgiver have taken upon himself the disgrace of having enacted it. Every instance of punishment among men is a sort of atonement to the justice of the country, the design of which is to restore the authority of good government, which transgression has impaired. But if the law itself is bad, or the penalty too severe, every sacrifice made to it must be an instance of cruelty; and should a prince of the blood royal, in compassion to the offenders, offer to suffer in their stead, for the purpose of atonement, whatever love it might discover on his part, it were still greater cruelty to accept the offer, even though he might survive his sufferings. The public voice would be, There is no need of any atonement; it will do no honor, but dishonor, to the legislature; and to call the liberation of the convicts an act of grace, is to add insult to injury. The law ought not to have been enacted, and now it is enacted, ought immediately to be repealed. It is easy to see from hence, that in proportion as the law is depreciated the gospel is undermined, and both grace and atonement rendered void. It is the law as abused, or as turned into a way of life in opposition to the gospel, for which it was never given to a fallen creature, that the sacred Scriptures depreciate it; and not as the revealed will of God, the immutable standard of right and wrong. In this view the apostle delighted in it; and if we are Christians we shall delight in it, too; and shall not object to be under it as a rule of duty, for no man objects to be governed by laws which he loves." *TCNA 29.5*

How evident it appears that antinomianism is opposed to the Scriptures and to all just reasoning. And how easy to perceive that a disparagement of the ten commandments leads to laxity of the morality enforced by those commandments. When the Lord gave that law, he said they would be a holy people if they obeyed it. David said that it was perfect, and that he greatly loved it. Solomon said that to keep God's commandments is the whole duty of man. The Saviour said his Father's law was in his heart, and that worship is vain where the commandments of God are made void. Paul said the doers of the law shall be justified; that the righteousness or precept of the law is fulfilled in those who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit; that the law is spiritual, holy, just, and good; and

that it is not made void through faith. And we confidently appeal to all if they think it possible that vital piety and earnest zeal for the honor and the truth of God can exist where that law is reproached and disregarded, which is so highly honored and so strongly enforced in all God's word. David prayed that his eyes might be opened to behold wondrous things out of the law of God. Too many now shut their eyes against all its wonders and glory, and their hearts against its holy claims. Paul said the law was his delight; but these delight to revile the law and cast reproach upon it. *TCNA 30.1*

On which side would you, dear reader, wish to be found in that day when "God shall bring every work into Judgment"? when every man shall be rewarded according to his works? when the angel shall announce, "Here are they that keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus"? If we are to be judged by the law, how important that we come into harmony with it before that day of terror comes! As we stand related to it in probation, so shall we be related to it in the Judgment. Now we can prepare ourselves for his service, and turn away from sin to obedience; then mercy will be denied to all the unreconciled. *TCNA 31.1*

"Strong delusions" are increasing. The form of godliness without the power is prevailing. Iniquity abounds, and the love of many waxes cold. There is only one way to be shielded from the influence of evil and of error, and that is to seek the enlightening, guiding, and sanctifying influence of God's Spirit, and, through faith in Christ, walk in obedience to the revealed will of God. *TCNA 31.2*

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